

## **“Defending False Accusations,” Part 3 - 2 Corinthians 10:13-18 – January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

- Today's teaching will be part three of a series I've titled, "Defending False Accusations."
- We'll finish chapter ten today, and in so doing see, by way of Paul's example, how it is that we are to respond to antagonists.
- This because, the Apostle Paul is defending himself against those in Corinth who were viciously attacking him to discredit him.

### **1. Be humble and bold (Verses 1-2)**

- Paul appeals to them by Christ's humility and gentleness saying that he doesn't want to be bold toward those who accused him.

### **2. Fight with spiritual weapons (Verses 3-6)**

- Paul says our weapons are not carnal but spiritual with divine power to demolish strongholds by taking every thought captive.

### **3. Build up instead of tearing down (Verses 7-10)**

- Here Paul rebukes them for judging by outward appearances after they had attacked him with the purpose of tearing down.

### **4. Don't compare yourself with others (Verses 11-12)**

- Paul says he won't dare compare himself with some who commend them self, as comparing oneself with oneself is not wise.

### **5. Understand your God given authority (Verses 13-14)**

13 We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the sphere of service God himself has assigned to us, a sphere that also includes you. 14 We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ.

- v13 Paul tells them he won't boast beyond measure, but will limit it to what God has appointed to him, which also includes them.
- v14 Paul says he's not going too far in boasting, as would be the case if he hadn't come to them, which they did for the gospel.
- What Paul is saying here is the stayed within the limits of God's calling on his life such that he didn't go into someone else's.

One commentator explained it best this way. "The idea of the limits of the sphere comes from the lanes that were allotted for runners in a race. The Corinthians would recognize this because they loved races and held the famous Isthmian Games in Corinth. Paul is saying, 'I'm running in my own lane and not in someone else's.' ...All godly authority has a sphere. It is important for the person in authority to not exercise that authority outside the sphere, and it is important for the person under authority to recognize the sphere of authority they are under.

- It's important to understand there were some in the Corinthian church that were trying to delegitimize Paul's apostolic authority.
- It's for this reason Paul takes such a firm posture and harsh tone with them in defending himself against their vicious attacks.
- I find it rather ironic that these Christians in the Corinthian church were guilty of the very thing that they were accusing Paul of.

- I would suggest that this is textbook when it comes to those who falsely accuse you by questioning the sphere of your authority.
- The fact of the matter is there will always be those who not only question your authority, they will never submit to your authority.
- Such was the case as it relates to the Apostle Paul, and as we'll see next, he discerns the selfish motive on the part of Corinth.

### **6. Discern the underlying motivation (Verses 15-18)**

15 Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our sphere of activity among you will greatly expand, 16 so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. For we do not want to boast about work already done in someone else's territory. 17 But, "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord." 18 For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

- v15 Paul says they didn't go beyond their limits boasting of what others did, as their hope is that their faith continues to grow.
- v16 He goes on to say it's so they can preach the gospel in regions beyond them so as to not build on another man's foundation.
- v17-18 He says let those who boast do so in the Lord for it's not the one who commends himself that's approved, it's the Lord.

- Here, the Apostle Paul puts his finger on what I would argue is the most dangerous and destructive dynamic within the church.
- Namely, that of what motivates carnal and antagonistic Christians to wield their self-perceived authority so as to split a church.
- If there was anyone who could speak to this, it was the Apostle Paul, by virtue of his experience with wolves in sheep's clothing.

Acts 20:28–31 (NKJV) — 28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

Clarke - "It is base, abominable, and deeply sinful, for a man to thrust himself into other men's labors, and by sowing doubtful disputations among a Christian people, distract and divide them, that he may get a party to himself ... This is an evil that has prevailed much in all ages of the Church; there is at present much of it in the Christian world, and Christianity is disgraced by it."

- I'm hoping you'll kindly indulge me in closing as I share from my own personal experience how painful this can be to a church.
- Sadly, I've been on the receiving end of false accusations from those with an agenda hoping to draw disciples to themselves.
- Thankfully, in over twelve years since I planted this amazing church, we have never had a church split, and I hope we never do.